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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the phenomena of strike propensity and strike compliance among teachers in an illegal teachers' strike that occurred in British Columbia, Canada, in 1983. A questionnaire developed for this study was distributed in early 1984 to a random sample of 1,000 teachers from eight school districts; a total of 456 responded. The study sought information relating to teachers' strike propensity; their reasons for voting for or against the strike; their strike compliance (whether they participated in the strike action); their reasons for participating or not participating in the strike action; their attitudes toward the teachers' union; their feeling of identification with the teachers' union; their attitude toward the issue prompting the strike; their attitude on whether teachers should have the right to strike; and their level of concern over working conditions and the public image of the teaching profession. Appended are 24 references and 11 data tables. (SI)

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# Attitudes of Strikers and Strikebreakers in an Illegal Teachers' Strike: A Study of Strike Propensity and Strike Compliance

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

## Attitudes of Strikers and Strikebreakers in an Illegal Teachers' Strike: A Study of Strike Propensity and Strike Compliance

### Purposes

The last decade has seen the development of ever increasing collective militancy by public sector employees. In a decade when strikes by private sector employees have been declining, strikes by public sector employees have been increasing (Kearney, 1984). Strikes by teachers have accounted for the largest portion of the growth in public sector employee strikes (Kerchener, 1988).

The growth in the number of teacher strikes has been widespread throughout United States and Canada. Strikes have occurred in states and provinces where they are prohibited by law almost as often as where they are permitted by law. The former public image of teachers as a docile and subservient workforce has been changed in the past decade to that of a militant group of public sector workers who are steadfast and resolute in the pursuit of their employment objectives, even if it means engaging in illegal strike activity.

This study investigated the phenomena of strike propensity and strike compliance among teachers in an illegal teachers' strike which occurred in British Columbia, Canada in 1983. Strike propensity is defined in terms of the willingness of the individual teacher to vote for strike action. Strike compliance is defined in terms of the individual teacher's actual participation in the strike action. The main question asked in the study was: "Why are some teachers willing to vote for and participate in an illegal strike and other teachers are not?" Three aspects of this question were probed:

1) How is strike propensity in teachers related to teachers' attitudes (particularly attitudes toward their teachers' union) and involvement in union affairs?

   Strike propensity in teachers was examined particularly in terms of its relationship to teachers' attitudes attitudes toward the teachers' union and its leadership, policies and practices; their feeling of identification with the teachers' union; and their level of interest in union affairs. Strike propensity was also examined in relationship to teachers' level and kind of involvement in union affairs. Strike propensity of teachers was also examined in terms of its relationship to teachers' attitudes about the issue which prompted the strike; their attitudes toward question of whether teachers should have the right to strike; their their concern over the image of the teaching profession; their concern over the state of working conditions; and their personal reasons for voting for or against going out on strike.

2) What is the relationship between strike propensity in teachers and strike compliance in teachers?

   Do the teachers who voted for striking actually go out on strike? Do other teachers who voted to strike continue to work? Conversely, do teachers who voted against striking cross picket lines to continue working? Do others change their mind and stay off the job?

3) How is strike compliance in teachers related to teachers' attitudes (particularly attitudes toward their teachers' union) and involvement in union affairs?

   Strike compliance was examined in terms of the same set of attitudes and kinds of involvements that were used to examine strike propensity

with the addition that respondents were also asked to indicate their reasons for either continuing to work or joining the strike when it began.

**Perspectives**

The reasons why teachers engage in strike action, especially illegal strike action, is not totally clear. Cooper (1982) suggests that there are two schools of thought on why teachers strike. One school suggests that strikes are irrational acts which occur when emotions overcome reason. The other school suggests that strikes are rational acts which occur when breakdowns in collective bargaining and other formal rational processes occur.

There is some evidence to suggest that certain strikes can be conceived as irrational acts that occur when teachers' malaise and sense of frustration wells up and results in work stoppages (Ravitch, 1974; Cresswell and Murphy, 1980; Lieberman, 1981). Most studies of teacher strikes treat them, however, as rational acts which can be explained in a plausible way. Research on teacher strikes as rational acts have sought to explain strike propensity and strike compliance in terms of teacher characteristics such as age, sex, grade level taught (Bruno and Nelken, 1975; Hennessey, 1975; Selinger, 1976; Fris, 1976; Selinger, 1980); political leaning (Bruno and Nelken, 1975); issues at stake such as salaries, working conditions, and job security (Torrence, 1976; Perry, 1977; Greer and Brown, 1982); school bureaucratization (Kratzman, Bryne and Worth, 1981); and attitudes toward the teachers' union (Lane and Thompson, 1981; Greer amd Brown, 1982). Most of these studies using the above variables have tended to produce inconclusive findings regarding the relationship of these variables to the strike propensity and strike compliance of teachers. Horn, McGuire and Tomkiewicz (1982) have attmepted to formulate a more general empirical model to explain strike activity by teachers. According to

these researchers, the type of bargaining tactic employed by school boards is the critical variable in explaining teacher strike activity. They state:

> It would appear that the propensity of teachers to strike can be significantly affected by the discretionary power of school boards. By instituting meaningful bilateral relationships (exemplified by collective negotiations) and being willing to recognize and respond intelligently to teacher expectations of equitable remuneration, school districts themselves possess the means to considerably lessen the incidence of strikes by teachers. (p. 163)

What does seem to be clear at the present time is that strike prospensity and strike compliance in teachers can not be adequately explained with the research studies done to date. For this reason a need exists for continued study of the strike behavior of teachers.

**Data Source**

Beginning in 1979 and continuing on into the early years of the 1980s there was mounting conflict between public sector employees and their governmental employers. Governments in the United States and Canada were faced with declining public revenues as a result of an economic slowdown across North America. As a result, governments practiced cutback management in their dealings with employees. Wage controls, salary rollbacks, layoffs, and closure of facilities became common features of public employment. Public employees in the United States and Canada responded to these restraint measures with vigorous protest. In July, 1979, a coalition of federal workers set up 3500 pickets in front of the White House to protest wage controls. In the same year in October, San Francisco teachers struck to protest the layoff of 1200 teachers. Early in 1980 in Chicago, the third largest school

system in United States was struck to protest teacher layoffs. Work stoppages of public employees in the United States also occurred in the early 1980s in Minnesota, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

In Canada the reaction of public employee groups to government cutbacks was strong and vigorous. Nowhere was this more true than in British Columbia. The economy of the province of British Columbia was hit hard by the economic slowdown of the early 1980s. Government revenues fell dramatically and large cutbacks in public spending took place. Education was particularly affected and over 2000 of the province's 28,000 teachers lost their positions. Opposition to the government cutbacks was massive. A coalition of public employee groups, named Operation Solidarity, was formed in 1983 to fight the provincial government cutbacks (Palmer, 1987). In trying to force the government to abandon its cutback management policies, Operation Solidarity planned a series of escalating strikes of public employees. The leadership of the teachers' union, the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (BCTF), asked its members for a provincial strike mandate in October, 1983. In the strike vote that was held, 59.45% of the province's teachers voted in favor of striking, and 40.55% of the teachers voted against striking (Kilian, 1985). In November, 1983 the teachers went out on strike as part of the Operation Solidarity escalating strike action plan. The teachers' strike lasted only three days as an accord was reached between the provincial government and Operation Solidarity on the government's cutback measures.

A questionnaire developed for this study was distributed in early 1984 to a random sample of of 1000 teachers chosen from a purposive sample of eight school districts. The eight school districts that were chosen from the 75 school districts in the province possessed two important characteristics: 1) teachers in four of the school districts had shown high strike compliance (89% to 100%

participation in strike action); teachers in the other four school districts had shown low strike compliance (24% to 60% participation in strike action); and 2) four of the districts were urban districts and four of the districts were rural districts.

A total of 456 (45.6%) questionnaires was returned. In terms of voting behavior on the strike mandate, the percentages for the usable sample and the total provincial populatior of teachers are remarkably similar. In the usable sample, 60.1% of the teachers indicated that they voted in favor of strike action. In the provincial population of teachers, 59.4% of teachers had voted in favor of strike action. Similarly, 39.2% of the usable sample indicated they voted against strike action as compared to 40.6% of the provincial population of teachers which had voted against strike action.

**Methods**

The questionnaire developed for this study sought information relating to teachers' strike propensity (how they voted on the strike mandate); their reasons for voting for or against the strike; their strike compliance (whether they participated in the strike action); their reasons for participating or not particpating in the strike action; their attitudes toward the teachers' union and its leadership, policies and practices; their feeling of identification with the teachers' union; their level of involvement in teachers' union affairs; their attitudes toward the issue prompting the strike (cutbacks in education); their attitudes on whether teachers should have the right to strike; and their level of concern over working conditions and the public image of the teaching profession. The items dealing with attitudes toward the teachers' union and involvement in union affai s were adapted from a study done by Ingram (1965, 1966) on member identification and involvement in the Alberta Teachers' Association. Other items were developed especially for this study.

No attempt was made in this study to relate a wide array of teacher characteristics to strike propensity and strike compliance in teachers. The only characteristics that were examined in relationship to strike propensity and strike compliance were years of teaching experience, type of contract held by the teacher respondent (temporary or continuing), and the size of the local association (union) group.

The draft questionnaire was reviewed by a group of elected and staff personnel at the B.C. Teachers' Federation to insure clarity and appropriateness. A pilot study was done with a sample of 25 teachers to seek further clarification and to remove ambiguities. A final version of the questionnaire was mailed to each of the 1000 teacher respondents. The data from the returned questionnaires were analysed using appropriate parametric and non-parametric statistics.

In terms of analysis, the attitudes and behaviors of those teachers high in strike propensity were compared with the attitudes and behaviors of those teachers low in strike propensity. The teachers who had voted in favor of strike action and who exhibited high strike propensity were labelled Supporters. The teachers who had voted against strike action and who had exhibited low strike propensity were labelled Opposers.

Secondly, the actions of the Supporters and Opposers were analysed in terms of their strike compliance. Four groups were identified for comparison. The Supporters who actually went out on strike were labelled the Striking Supporters whereas those Supporters who did not go out on strike were labelled the Nonstriking Supporters. With reference to Opposers, those Opposers who joined the strike were labelled Striking Opposers whereas those Opposers who continued to go to school were labelled the Nonstriking Opposers.

Finally, the attitudes and behaviors of the Striking Supporters and the Nonstriking Supporters were compared. Similarly, the attitudes and behaviors of the Striking Opposers and the Nonstriking Opposers were compared.

## Results

### Strike Propensity: Relationship to Attitudes and Involvement in Union Affairs

The results shown in tables 1 and 2 indicate a strong and statistically significant relationship between strike propensity and teacher attitudes and union involvements. Supporters differed significantly from Opposers on all but one of the 18 attitude items. Supporters differed most significantly from Opposers in their attitudes about the teacher union: its leadership, policies and practices; their feeling of identification with the union; and their level of interest in union affairs. Smaller statistically significant differences existed between Supporters and Opposers on items dealing with the strike issue, the right to strike by teachers, working conditions, and one of the items dealing with the image of the teaching profession. The only item on which Supporters and Opposers did not differ significantly was the question of the whether a major goal of the teaching profession should be to improve the public image of the profession (table 1).

Supporters differed significantly from Opposers in their degree of current involvement in local association (union) affairs. Supporters and Opposers did not differ significantly, however, in terms of their past involvement in local union affairs nor did they differ significantly in terms of their involvement in provincial activities of the BCTF.

The results shown in table 3 do not show any significant relationships between teacher characte isitcs and strike propensity.

Table 4 shows the regression analysis of attitudes, involvements, and characteristics to predict strike propensity. There were seven items which were statistically significant and they can be grouped as follows: three which are concerned with attitudes toward the teachers' union ("If I had a choice, I would not belong to the BCTF"; "Teachers should abide by the majority decision of the BCTF"; "The BCTF attempts to exercise too much control over individual members"); one which relates to degree of union involvement ("I attend local association meetings on a regular basis"); one which relates to the strike issue ("The present cutbacks in education are necessary and justified"); one which relates to the right to strike ("Legislation should allow teachers the legal right to strike"); and one which relates to the public image of the teaching profession ("A withdrawal of teachers' services succeeds only in diminishing the public image of the teaching profession').

Respondents were provided with an open-ended question in which they could indicate their personal reasons for voting for or against strike action (table 5). Each respondent could list up to five reasons in order of preference. The main reasons cited by Supporters related to concern for education funding and how this impacted on students and working conditions. A strike was indicated as necessary to protest against the education cutbacks.

The reasons Opposers voted against strike action were that they felt a strike would not solve anything, that it was unprofessional to strike, that the strike was illegal, that the public image of teachers would suffer and that BCTF directions on this issue were wrong (table 6).

**Relationship Between Strike Propensity and Strike Compliance**

Table 7 shows the relationship between strike propensity and strike compliance. The vast majority (93.8%) of those who voted for the strike

(Supporters) went out on strike (Striking Supporters). A small percentage (5.9%) of Supporters went to work (Nonstriking Supporters).

Almost two-thirds (63.4%) of Opposers who voted against striking crossed picket lines to go to work (Nonstriking Opposers). Slightly over a third of Opposers who voted against striking did not cross pickets and did not go to work (Striking Opposers).

**Strike Compliance: Relationship to Attitudes and Involvement in Union Affairs**

**Striking Supporters vis-a-vis Nonstriking Supporters.** No detailed statistical comparison was made on attitudes and union involvments between Striking Supporters and Nonstriking Supporters. The reason for this was that the number of Nonstriking Supporters was very small (n=15). An analysis was done, however, of the reasons given by these Nonstriking Supporters as to why they did not go out on strike after having voted to strike. In nearly all cases, these Supporters were in schools in which the majority of the teaching staff had not gone out on strike. The Supporters reported feeling a pressure to go along with the majority of their nonstriking staff colleagues by coming to school.

**Striking Opposers vis-a-vis Nonstriking Opposers.** Table 8 shows the differences in attitudes between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers. Although the differences in attitudes between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers are not as widespread or as great in magnitude as the differences in attitudes between Supporters and Opposers in general (see table 1); there are still statistically significant differences between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers on 10 of the 18 attitude items. The strongest differences between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers are on five of the seven items dealing with attitudes toward the teachers' union and its

leadership, policies and practices. In terms of a feeling of identification with the teachers' union, there was a strong tendency, which approached statistical significance (p=.057) on two items, for Nonstriking Opposers to feel a lesser sense of identification with the BCTF than was the case for the Striking Opposers.

The five other items on which there were statistically significant differences beteen Striking Supporters and Nonstriking Supporters related to the strike issue; the right to strike; working conditions (two items); and the public image of teachers (one item). If tables 1 and 8 are examined together it can be seen that on all the 18 attitude items the Striking Opposers occupy a middle attitudinal position between the attitude extremes of the Supporters and the Nonstriking Opposers.

There were no statistically significant differences in current or past union involvement between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers (table 9). Nor were there any statistically significant differences in teacher characteristics between Striking Opposers and Nonstriking Opposers (table 10).

Finally, table 11 reports the reasons given by Striking Opposers on why they went out on strike after having voted against strike action. The first three most frequent reasons given all relate to collegial pressure of one kind or another to join in the strike.

## Discussion

What this study revealed was a strong and clear relationship between the attitudes of teachers toward their teachers' union and the strike propensity of teachers. In this study, teachers who had favorable attitudes toward the the teachers' union voted in favor of strike action. They were the Supporters. Teachers who had negative opinions of the union voted against strike action. They were the Opposers. Attitudes toward the teachers' union were a much

better predictor of strike propensity than any other attitude, including attitudes toward the issue on which the strike focused, the issue of educational cutbacks.

The study also revealed a strong and clear relationship between current involvement in local association (union) affairs and strike propensity in teachers. At the time of the strike vote, teachers who were active in local union affairs, either by attending meetings or by holding office, tended to support strike action. Teachers who were not involved in local affairs at the time of the strike vote were more inclined to vote against strike action. This finding is supportive of findings in other studies (Klandermans, 1986) which show that degree of participation in the union organization is significantly related to willingness to participate in a union action.

What emerges from the study's results is a fairly clear profile of Supporters and Opposers in terms of strike propensity. In this study a Supporter was a teacher who held positive attitudes toward the BCTF. Given a choice, this teacher would choose to belong to the BCTF. This teacher felt that he or she was an integral part of the BCTF and had a high level of interest in local and provincial affairs of the BCTF. He or she was actively involved in local union affairs and was satisfied with the leadership provided by the BCTF. This teacher believed that all teachers should have the legal right to strike and that all members of the BCTF should abide by any majority decision made by the BCTF. He or she felt that a strike was necessary to protest the education cutbacks and the deleterious effects these cutbacks were having on both students and working conditions.

In contrast, an Opposer was a teacher who held negative attitudes toward the BCTF. If this teacher had a choice, he or she would not belong to the BCTF. This teacher felt that the BCTF was too political and that it spent too much time opposing the provincial government. The BCTF should concern

itself instead with professional matters. This teacher also felt that the BCTF tried to exercise too much control over individual members, and in many ways, the decision-making structures of the BCTF were undemocratic. This teacher did not feel that he or she was an integral part of the BCTF. This teacher was not highly interested in BCTF affairs nor was he or she actively involved at the present time in local union affairs, either by attending meetings or by holding office. This teacher did not think that teachers should have the legal right to strike. A teachers' strike simply diminishes the image of the teaching profession in the eyes of the public. This teacher voted against strike action because it was not only unprofessional to strike, it was also against the law. In any case, a teachers' strike would not solve anything.

The results of the study showed that strike compliance is closely related to strike propensity when the views of teachers are strongly held. In other words, when a teacher is in favor of striking and the teacher has strong opinions on the issues surrounding the strike, the teacher will go out on strike. The teacher becomes a Striking Supporter. The Striking Supporters in this study had the strongest pro-union attitudes, were the most involved in local union activites, were least concerned about the illegality of the strike, were most concerned about the deterioration in working conditions, did not feel a strike would diminsh the image of the teaching profession, and were most opposed to the government's educational cutbacks.

Conversely, when a teacher is opposed to striking and the teacher has strong opinions on the issues surrounding the strike, the teacher will cross the picket line and continue to work. The teacher becomes a Nonstriking Opposer. The Nonstriking Opposers in this study had the strongest anti-union views, did feel a sense of identification with the union, were not involved in local union affairs, were concerned about the damage a strike would do to the public image

of teachers, were concerned about the illegality of the strike, and did not feel that a strike would solve anything.

When a teacher holds opinions on the issues surrounding the strike that are somewhere between the extremes of the opinions of the Striking Supporters and the Nonstriking Opposers, group pressure determines whether the teacher becomes a striker or a nonstriker. In other words, the teacher does what the majority of teachers in his or her school are doing. In this study, only a small percentage of teachers who voted in favor of striking actually continued to work (Nonstriking Supporters). They went to work because their staff colleagues went to work and they felt a pressure to do likewise. On the other hand, over a third ( 35.5%) of those who voted against striking acually joined the strike. They did not cross picket lines to go to work. These teachers became the Striking Opposers. Why did they join the strike? They joined the strike because the majority of their school staff colleagues supported the strike. They felt a pressure to join with the majority. This strong sense of allegiance to one's staff colleagues in a school is very characteristic of the teaching culture. Allegiance to one's colleagues and one's school often supersedes allegiance to one's union (Johnson, 1984).

The results of this study are of both theoretical and practical importance. In terms of theory, important new evidence has been presented that shows a strong relationship between teachers' attitudes toward their union and their propensity to strike and to comply with the strike action.

In terms of practical importance, this study's results are important to teacher unions. The results indicate that if teachers' unions want to achieve their objectives through strike action that they must be concerned with promoting the acceptance of the idea of strike action by teachers' unions. A sizeable minority of teachers are strongly opposed to the very idea of teacher

unions and are even more strongly opposed to the idea of strike action. As Johnson (1984) points out these teachers "repudiate the blue collar image of unions--pickets, mobs, rigidity--which they consider inconsisitent with professionalism "(p. 150). What leaders of teacher unions must do then is carry out further development of the idea of the professional union. This would be a union which would provide the benefits of collective bargaining and at the same time promote and protect the ideals of professionalism as they pertain to teaching (Kerchener, 1988; Beneviste, 1987).

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Table 1

Comparison of the differences in the attitudes of teacher supporters and opposers of the British Columbia teachers' strike

(Supporters n = 272; Opposers n = 172)

| Attitude Toward Area/Item(s) | Supporters | | Opponents | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | t | p |
| The Strike Issue: Cutbacks in Education | | | | | | |
| The present cutbacks in education funding are necessary and justified | 1.41 | .88 | 2.63 | 1.38 | -10.34 | .000 |
| The Right to Strike by Teachers | | | | | | |
| Legislation should allow teachers the legal right to strike | 4.07 | 1.17 | 2.28 | 1.46 | 13.57 | .000 |
| Working Conditions | | | | | | |
| Teachers should continue to protest against learning and working conditions which do not meet the minimum standards established by the teaching profession | 4.71 | .81 | 3.91 | 1.24 | 7.51 | .000 |
| Learning and working conditions have deteriorated during the past three years | 4.68 | .83 | 3.86 | 1.33 | 7.26 | .000 |
| Image of the Teaching Profession | | | | | | |
| A major goal of the teaching profession should be to improve the public image of the profession | 3.97 | 1.16 | 3.92 | 1.26 | .47 | .637 |
| A withdrawal of teachers' services succeeds only in diminishing the public image of the teaching profession | 2.75 | 1.24 | 4.13 | 1.05 | -12.52 | .00 |

.....cont.

Table 1 continued.....

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <u>The Teachers' Union: Its Leadership, Policies and Practices</u> | | | | | | |
| The BCTF spends too much time opposing the government | 2.13 | 1.26 | 3.62 | 1.37 | -11.54 | .000 |
| The BCTF should concern itself with professional matters | 4.11 | 1.22 | 4.46 | .87 | -3.49 | .001 |
| Teachers should abide by the majority decision of the BCTF | 4.33 | .95 | 2.80 | 1.39 | 12.69 | .000 |
| If I had the choice, I would not belong to the BCTF | 1.44 | .87 | 3.13 | 1.43 | -13.96 | .000 |
| In general, I am satisfied with the leadership provided by the BCTF Executive | 3.77 | 1.17 | 2.43 | 1.20 | 11.59 | .000 |
| The BCTF represents the majority of its members through its decision-making structures | 3.69 | 1.19 | 2.45 | 1.25 | 10.40 | .000 |
| The BCTF attempts to exercise too much control over individual members | 2.01 | 1.04 | 3.43 | 1.24 | -12.41 | .000 |
| <u>Feeling of Identification with the Teachers' Union</u> | | | | | | |
| I do not feel that I am an integral part of the BCTF | 2.28 | 1.30 | 3.62 | 1.31 | -10.48 | .000 |
| I do not feel that I am an integral part of my local association | 2.02 | 1.24 | 3.09 | 1.40 | -8.19 | .000 |
| <u>Level of Interest in Union Affairs</u> | | | | | | |
| My level of interest in the affairs of my local association is high | 3.54 | .95 | 2.89 | .98 | 6.95 | .000 |
| My level of interest in the affairs of the BCTF is high | 3.33 | .91 | 2.66 | .97 | 7.34 | .000 |

[a]Scoring for all times is as follows: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree

Table 2

Comparison of the differences in teacher involvement in union affairs between supporters and opposers in the British Columbia Teachers' strike

(Supporters n = 272; Opposers n = 172)

| Involvement Dimension | Supporters $\bar{x}^a$ | Supporters S.D. | Opposers $\bar{x}^a$ | Opposers S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I attend local association meetings on a regular basis | 1.57 | .50 | 1.32 | .47 | 5.31 | .000 |
| I am presently a member of a provincial BCTF committee | 1.04 | .21 | 1.05 | .22 | -0.39 | .698 |
| I am a member of my local teachers' association executive | 1.22 | .42 | 1.13 | .34 | 2.49 | .013 |
| I am a member of a local teachers' association committee | 1.23 | .42 | 1.13 | .34 | 2.75 | .006 |
| I have served in the past in either of the above two local capacities | 1.52 | .50 | 1.43 | .50 | 1.76 | .079 |

a. Scoring for the above questions is as follows: 2 = Yes; 1 = No

Table 3

Comparison on selected teacher characteristics between supporters and opposers in the British Columbia teachers' strike

(Supporters n = 272; Opposers n = 172)

| Characteristic | Supporters X | Supporters S.D. | Opposers X | Opposers S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years of teaching experience[a] | 4.11 | .81 | 4.27 | .86 | -1.89 | .060 |
| Type of contract[b] | 1.98 | .13 | 1.97 | .17 | .72 | .472 |
| Size of local association[c] | 2.70 | .83 | 2.78 | .73 | -1.05 | .296 |

Response Categories

[a]1. less than 1 year
2. 1 year to 2 years
3. 4 years to 6 years
4. 7 years to 14 years
5. 15 or more years

[b]1. Temporary
2. Continuing

[c]1. Less than 100 members
2. Between 100 and 399 members
3. Between 400 and 1000 members
4. Over 1000 members

Table 4

Multiple stepwise regression of attitude and involvement items to predict support or opposition to strike action by the British Columbia Teachers' Association

| Step | Variable Entered | Multiple R | $R^2$ | Increase in in $R^2$ | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | If I had the choice, I would not belong to the BCTF | .593 | .351 | .351 | 240.59 | .000 |
| 2. | Legislation should allow teachers the legal right to strike | .660 | .435 | .084 | 65.88 | .000 |
| 3. | A withdrawal of teachers' services succeeds only in diminishing the public image of the teaching profession | .714 | .510 | .075 | 45.67 | .000 |
| 4. | The present cutbacks in education funding are necessary and justified | .724 | .524 | .014 | 12.61 | .000 |
| 5. | Teachers should abide by the majority decision of the BCTF | .732 | .536 | .012 | 11.26 | .001 |
| 6. | The BCTF attempts to exercise too much control over individual members | .735 | .540 | .004 | 4.22 | .040 |
| 7. | I attend local association general meetings on a regular basis | .738 | .545 | .005 | 4.41 | .036 |

Table 5

Reasons Supporters Voted in Favour of the Strike

(Supporters n = 272)

| Reason | Number of Times Mentioned[a] |
|---|---|
| Concern for education funding | 246 |
| Protest against government budget and legislation | 224 |
| Concern for students | 218 |
| Concern for working conditions | 206 |
| Time teachers took a stand | 129 |
| Concern for loss of jobs | 110 |
| Seniority based job security | 68 |
| Teachers should have the right to strike | 60 |
| Unprofessional not to strike | 9 |
| Other (miscellaneous) | 16 |

[a]Each respondent could mention up to five reasons.

Table 6

Reasons Opposers Voted Against the Strike

(Opponents n = 172)

| Reason | Number of Times Mentioned[a] |
|---|---|
| Unprofessional to strike | 109 |
| Withdrawing services wouldn't solve anything | 109 |
| Concern about legality of the issue | 104 |
| Concern over public image | 99 |
| Teaching is an essential service | 86 |
| Disapproval of BCTF directions | 75 |
| Possible loss of pay | 37 |
| Fear for job or promotion | 25 |
| Religious beliefs | 11 |
| Other (miscellaneous) | 39 |

[a]Each respondent could mention up to five reasons.

Table 7

Actions Taken on the First Day of the Strike by Supporters and Opposers

(Supporters n = 272; Opposers n = 172)

| Action | Supporters n | Supporters % | Opposers n | Opposers % |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Withdrew service | 256 | 93.8% | 61 | 35.5% |
| Went to work | 15 | 5.9 | 108 | 63.4 |
| Other (sick, etc.) | 1 | .4 | 3 | 1.2 |
| Totals | 292 | 100% | 172 | 100% |

Table 8

Comparison of the differences in attitudes between striking opposers and non-striking opposers in the British Columbia Teachers' strike

(Striking opposers n = 64, Non-striking opposers n = 108)

| Attitude Toward Item | Striking Opposers $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | Non-striking Opposers $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Strike Issue: Cutbacks in Education | | | | | | |
| The present cutbacks in education funding are necessary and justified | 2.34 | 1.24 | 2.80 | 1.44 | -2.18 | .031 |
| The Right to Strike by Teachers | | | | | | |
| Legislation should allow teachers the legal right to strike | 2.80 | 1.50 | 1.97 | 1.36 | 3.60 | .000 |
| Working Conditions | | | | | | |
| Teachers should continue to protest against learning and working conditions which do not meet the minimum standards established by the teaching profession | 4.31 | .85 | 3.66 | 1.37 | 3.82 | .000 |
| Learning and working conditions have deteriorated during the past three years | 4.29 | 1.04 | 3.61 | 1.42 | 3.57 | .000 |
| Image of the Teaching Profession | | | | | | |
| A major goal of the teaching profession should be to improve the public image of the profession | 3.97 | 1.22 | 3.89 | 1.29 | .42 | .679 |
| A withdrawal of teachers' service succeeds only in diminishing the public image of the teaching profession | 3.84 | 1.13 | 4.30 | .97 | -2.68 | .008 |
| The Teachers' Union: Its Leadership, Policies and Practices | | | | | | |
| The BCTF spends too much time opposing the government | 3.42 | 1.38 | 3.74 | 1.36 | -1.47 | .143 |
| The BCTF should concern itself with professional matters | 4.37 | .96 | 4.51 | .82 | -1.00 | .318 |
| Teachers should abide by the majority decision of the BCTF | 3.60 | 1.37 | 2.38 | 1.18 | 6.16 | .000 |

.....cont.

Table 8 continued.....

| Attitude Toward Item | Striking Opponents $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | Non-striking Opponents $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| If I had the choice, I would not belong to the BCTF | 2.61 | 1.43 | 3.44 | 1.34 | -3.78 | .000 |
| In general, I am satisfied with the leadership provided by the BCTF executive | 2.78 | 1.24 | 2.22 | 1.13 | 2.94 | .004 |
| The BCTF represents the majority of its members through its decision-making structures | 2.75 | 1.30 | 2.27 | 1.19 | 2.43 | .017 |
| The BCTF attempts to exercise too much control over individual members | 3.06 | 1.34 | 3.64 | 1.13 | -2.86 | .005 |
| Feeling of Identification with Teachers' Union | | | | | | |
| I do not feel that I am an integral part of the BCTF | 3.36 | 1.42 | 3.77 | 1.23 | -1.92 | .057 |
| I do not feel that I am an integral part of my local association | 3.09 | 1.41 | 3.08 | 1.39 | .05 | .963 |
| Level of Interest in Union Affairs | | | | | | |
| My level of interest in the affairs of my local association is high | 2.95 | .98 | 2.85 | .98 | .66 | .513 |
| My level of interest in the affairs of the BCTF is high | 2.72 | .83 | 2.62 | 1.05 | .68 | .496 |

[a]Scoring is as follows: 5 = Strongly agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree

Table 9

Comparison of the differences in teacher involvement in union affairs between opposers and non-striking opposers in the British Columbia teachers' strike

(Striking opposers n = 64; Non-striking opposers n = 108

| Involvement Dimension | Striking Opposers $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | Non-striking Opposers $\bar{X}^a$ | S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I attend local association meetings on a regular basis | 1.33 | .47 | 1.31 | .47 | .23 | .822 |
| I am presently a member of a provincial BCTF committee | 1.06 | .24 | 1.05 | .21 | .44 | .659 |
| I am a member of my local teachers' association executive | 1.14 | .35 | 1.13 | .34 | .20 | .840 |
| I am a member of a local teachers' association committee | 1.16 | .37 | 1.12 | .33 | .65 | .519 |
| I have served in the past in either of the above two local capacities | 1.41 | .50 | 1.45 | .50 | -0.54 | .590 |

[a]Scoring for the above questions is as follows: 2 = Yes; 1 = No

Table 10

Comparison on selected teacher characteristics between striking opposers and non-striking opposers in the British Columbia teachers' strike

(Striking opposers n = 64; Non-striking opposers n = 108)

| Characteristic | Striking Opposers X | S.D. | Non-striking Opposers X | S.D. | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Years of teaching experience[a] | 4.22 | .88 | 4.30 | .85 | -0.57 | .572 |
| Type of contract[b] | 1.98 | .13 | 1.96 | .19 | .90 | .369 |
| Size of local association[c] | 2.95 | .85 | 2.68 | .64 | 2.18 | .031 |

Response Categories

[a]1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 year to 2 years
3. 4 years to 6 years
4. 7 years to 14 years
5. 15 or more years

[b]1. Temporary
2. Continuing

[c]1. Less than 100 members
2. Between 100 and 399 members
3. Between 400 and 1000 members
4. Over 1000 members

Table 11

Striking Opposers: Reasons given for participation in the strike

(n = 64)

| Reasons | Number of Times Mentioned[a] |
|---|---|
| Desire to support the majority decision | 52 |
| Did not want to cross a picket line | 29 |
| Staff pressure | 21 |
| Pressure from family and/or friends | 6 |
| Change in personal beliefs | 5 |
| Other (miscellaneous) | 10 |

[a]Each respondent could mention up to five reasons.